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NSC BRIEFING 30 May 1960 ~~Laos~~ Laos

TURKEY

I. Planning for the 27 May military coup began in the Istanbul War College no later than early May--possibly as early as February. The coup planning was engineered by younger officers who offered the leadership of the new regime to senior officers at the very last moment.

A. Dissatisfaction had been growing within the army for several years as a result of:

1. Menderes' attempted use of the army to suppress his political opposition;
2. Sympathy for opposition leader Ismet Inonu and the university students, who were severely restricted by Menderes; and
3. Reports of corruption at high levels within the government, particularly in the use of foreign aid funds.

II. While it likely that some leaders of the opposition Republican Peoples Party were aware of plans for the coup, they apparently did not participate actively in either the planning or action phases.

A. Inonu repeatedly has declared he wishes to come to power by elections--not by military coup.

B. The leadership of the present govbernment is friendly to Inonu, however, and his advice is being sought and he is currently advising the NUC probably will be sought as problems arise.

III. Members of the previous government, including Menderes and the top military leaders, are under arrest.

A. The new government has announced that those arrested--about 200 in all--will be tried by civilian courts if charges are brought against them.

Some of those arrested will be tried by civilian courts if the evidence warrants

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IV. We have had no reports of significant opposition to the coup. On the contrary, there have been gala celebrations in Ankara and Istanbul.

A. Peasants, among whom Menderes found his basic support, are expected to accept the takeover with little, if any, outward display of opposition.

B. There is a possibility that there will be trouble in south-eastern Turkey, the stronghold of a Kurdish minority. Kurdish leaders, some of whom favor an independent Kurdistan, may try to capitalize on any confusion in Ankara in order to further this objective.

V. The new government is a mixture of professional officers and non-partisan civilian technical experts.

A. The "Committee of National Unity," which assumed power immediately after the coup, is led by General Cemal Gursel and contains three other senior army generals, one air force general, and two admirals.

1. Gursel is 65. He has been on enforced retirement since 5 May when he protested against the use of the army in politics.

2. While Gursel is publicly proclaimed as the new leader of the nation, we are continuing to watch for indications that the real power may be in other hands. No such indications have been received thus far.

B. The 18-member cabinet announced on 28 May contains 15 civilians an 3 officers--including Gursel, who holds the posts of premier and minister of national defense. Several university professors are included. The new minister of foreign affairs--Selim Sarper--is a long-time diplomat with experience at NATO and the UN.

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VI. The new government says it will re-establish democracy and maintain previous foreign policies.

A. A group of legal experts has been selected to re-write the constitution. A bi-cameral legislature is to replace the uni-cameral Grand National Assembly, which has been dissolved. A court to rule on constitutional matters will also be established Under the previous constitution the Grand National Assembly had unlimited power.

B. Gursel has promised "free elections" as soon as possible.

1. It is doubtful that this will be possible before autumn. Failure to move rapidly toward elections, however, could lead to early disenchantment with the new regime.

2. While elections might be "free" in the general sense of the term, it seems clear that the present government will not permit top members of the previous administration to regain power.

C. Gursel has assured the US and other allies that Turkey will remain loyal to all past alliances. We do not foresee any basic change in Turkish foreign policy.

25X1C (Note: We have learned [redacted] that the Turkish coup has had significant repercussions in Iran. [redacted] there is widespread activity among groups favoring a similar overthrow of the Shah's government.) 25X1C

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